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DE RUEHKG #0310 0452030  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 142030Z FEB 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2229  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
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UNCLAS KINGSTON 000310

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR (BENT), INL/LP (BOZZOLO), PM/DTC (RMAGGI)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA ADDS MUSCLE TO GUN LICENSING PROCESS

REF: 04 KINGSTON 01014

This Message is Sensitive But Unclassified. Please Handle Accordingly.

1. (SBU) On January 18, NAS Director met with Commissioner of Police Lucius Thomas to discuss the status of a 2004 investigation of widespread fraud in the issuance of gun licenses. In March 2004, due to intense media inquiries, a probe centered on the St. Andrew North Division revealed rampant corruption in the issuance of gun licenses and resulted in one superintendent being "retired in the public interest" and another officer given a non-command position (Reftel). Thomas stated that the investigation is still "ongoing" and would not provide any further information. He did advise that as of February 1, a new oversight body would have complete control over the issuance of gun licenses. Selected as Board Chairman for the new Independent Central Firearm Licensing Authority is Major General John Simmonds, a former Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) Officer. Additional members of the board include former Customs Commissioner Allison Moore, Ethan Sinclair, Noel Eldridge, Rodney Conway Chin and George Overton. Applicants who are rejected for a gun license now have an opportunity to appeal to a review board that is chaired by retired High Court Judge, Clarence Walker.

2. (SBU) According to Thomas, all police divisions have been instructed to hand over to this new licensing body all gun license applications which will be scanned into a database. There is also a new application form and applicant background investigation procedures.

3. (SBU) Comment: The integrity of the issuance of firearms licenses and permits has been called into question for over two years with no resolution to the ongoing investigation. (Although the previous rules required an individual seeking a permit to apply through the local JCF post, numerous individuals from outside the capital obtained their permits fraudulently with the assistance of a JCF post in Kingston.) While it has taken two years for this independent body to be constituted, the new Firearm Authority is a welcome step forward in the fight against illicit firearms and effectively removes the licensing function entirely from the police, which continues to be riddled with corrupt individuals. End Comment.  
JOHNSON